

YOUTH IN REVOLT, PAGE 6

THE INDYPENDENT

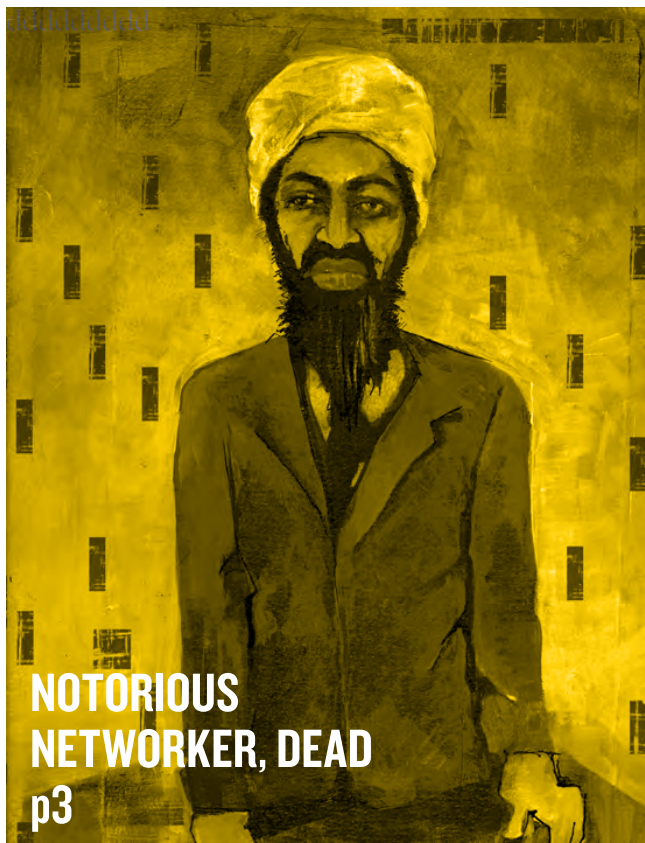
Issue #165, May 18–June 7
A FREE PAPER FOR FREE PEOPLE

TAKING IT TO THE STREETS

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THE LAST
OF THE
BOHEMIANS
p14



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The Indypendent is a New York-based free newspaper published 16 times a year on Wednesdays for our print and online readership of more than 200,000. It is produced by a network of volunteers who report, write, edit, draw, design, take photos, distribute, fundraise and provide website management. Since 2000, more than 650 journalists, artists and media activists have participated in this project. Winner of more than 50 New York Community Media Alliance awards, *The Indypendent* is funded by subscriptions, reader donations, grants, merchandise sales, benefits and advertising. We accept submissions that look at news and culture through a critical lens, exploring how systems of power — economic, political and social — affect the lives of people locally and globally. *The Indypendent* reserves the right to edit articles for length, content and clarity.

The Indypendent is affiliated with the New York City Independent Media Center, which is part of the global Indymedia movement, an international network dedicated to fostering grassroots media production, and with *IndyKids*, a children's newspaper. NYC IMC is an open publishing website (nyc.indymedia.org).

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JOIN US ON FACEBOOK AND TWITTER, AND FOLLOW OUR BLOGGERS EVERY DAY AT INDYPENDENT.ORG!

Please send event announcements to indyevents@gmail.com.

TUE MAY 24
7-10pm • Free
SCREENING: HIGH PEAKS, *LOW COAL*. Join local group New York Loves Mountains for an evening of film, discussion and music to learn more about how mountaintop removal harms Appalachian communities. There will be a screening of the documentary *Low Coal* followed by a discussion with the film's director, Jordan Freeman, and former union coal miner Chuck Nelson. Stick around afterwards for music by Morgan O'Kane who composed the score for the film.
The Commons, 388 Atlantic Ave, Bklyn
347-689-3908 • thecommonsbrooklyn.org

WED MAY 25
6-9pm • \$10-\$15 Sugg.
PANEL: A FORUM ON FRACKING. Spend the evening learning more about the controversy surrounding the practice of gas extraction called hydraulic-fracturing, also known as fracking. Environmentalists, scientists, community organizers and former government officials will discuss different issues related to fracking and its effects on communities and the environment.
New York Society for Ethical Culture,
2 W 64th St
212-874-5210 • nysec.org

6:30pm • Free
TALK: CHRIS HEDGES ON *DEATH OF THE LIBERAL CLASS*. Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist Chris Hedges will discuss his newest book, *Death of the Liberal Class*. The book examines the demise of classical liberalism in our society and the subsequent rise of the increasingly powerful corporate state.
Cooper Union Rose Auditorium,
41 Cooper Sq
212-353-4195 • www.cooper.edu

7-9pm • \$11
PERFORMANCE: *THE REVOLUTION WILL BE LIVE-STREAMED*. Hybrid Theatre Works presents an artist response forum featuring works of theater, dance, video, and visual art that explore the implications of recent uprisings in the Middle East and the role of the internet. The performances will be followed by an after-party.
ALWAN FOR THE ARTS, 16 BEAVER ST
646-732-3261 • alwanforthearts.org

THU MAY 26
7:30pm • \$6/\$10/\$15
TALK: *STOP SIGNS: CARS AND CAPITALISM ON THE ROAD TO ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND ECOLOGICAL DECAY*. Join authors Yves Engler and Bianca Mugenyi for a discussion of their new book *Stop Signs*, which explores the role of the automobile in the rise of capitalism as well as its connection to racism, media manipulation, environmental destruction and war.
Brecht Forum, 451 West St
212-242-4201 • brechtforum.org

SAT MAY 28
10am-4pm • Free
FUNDRAISER: FREEDOM HALL FABULOUS SPRING RUMMAGE SALE. Clean out your closets and help support the rummage sale to benefit the \$80,000 *Freedom Socialist* Newspaper Fund Drive. Donate your reusable items such as housewares, jewelry, CDs, kitchenware, clothing and books.
Freedom Hall, 113 W. 128th St
646-489-6529 • radicalwomen.org/newyork

FRI JUNE 3
7-8pm • \$20/\$16
FUNDRAISER: VEGAN CHURCH LADY BINGO NIGHT. Come to the Metropolitan Community Church of New York to eat a delicious vegan meal, play some bingo and raise money for MCCNY's various community charities including the Homeless Youth Services Sylvia's Place and the Sylvia Rivera Food Pantry.
MCCNY Art Gallery, 446 W 36th St
212-629-7440 • mccny.org

JUNE 3-12
\$8/\$10
FESTIVAL: 2011 BROOKLYN FILM FESTIVAL. More than 100 films will premiere this year at the Brooklyn Film Festival, whose mission is to bring the power of independent filmmaking to all Brooklyn and city residents. This year the films will tackle issues ranging from corporate takeovers and wars to abusive relationships and the role of government in modern society. Films will be screened at both Brooklyn Heights Cinema (70 Henry St, Bklyn) and indieScreen (289 Kent Ave, Bklyn).
718-388-4306 • brooklynfilmfestival.org

WHERE DO I GET MY COPY OF THE INDYPENDENT?

- BELOW 14TH ST.**
WBAI - 99.5FM
120 Wall St., 10th floor
DC 37 Headquarters
125 Barclay St.
Bluestockings
172 Allen St.
Housing Works
126 Crosby St.
Hudson Park Branch Library
66 Leroy St.
Mercer St. Books
206 Mercer St.
Whole Earth Bakery
130 St. Marks Place
Brecht Forum
451 West St.
4th Street Food Co-op
58 E. 4th St.
Theater for the New City
155 First Ave.
- 14TH TO 96TH ST.**
New York Public Library Epiphany Branch
228 E. 23rd St.
Chelsea Square Restaurant
W. 23rd St. & 9th Ave.
Manhattan Neighborhood Network
537 W. 59th St.
New York Public Library Muhlenberg Branch
209 W. 23rd St.
St. Agnes Branch Library
444 Amsterdam Ave.
(btwn W. 81st and 82nd Sts.)
- ABOVE 96TH ST.**
New York Public Library George Bruce Branch
518 W. 125th St.
Book Culture
526 W. 112th St.

- New York Public Library Harlem Branch
9 W. 124th St.
New York Public Library Hamilton Grange Branch
503 W. 145th St.
Uptown Sister's Books
W. 156 St. & Amsterdam
Bloomingdale Branch Library
150 W. 100th St.
- BROOKLYN**
Brooklyn Museum
200 Eastern Pkwy.
BAM
30 Lafayette Ave.
Tillie's of Brooklyn
248 DeKalb Ave.
Tea Lounge
Union St. & Seventh Ave.
Video Gallery
310 Seventh Ave.
- Ozzie's Coffee Shop
249 5th Ave.
57 Seventh Ave.
Verb Café
Bedford Ave. & N. 5th St.
Pillow Café
505 Myrtle Ave.
Sisters Community Hardware
900 Fulton St.
Brooklyn Public Library Pacific Street Branch
25 Fourth Ave.
K-Dog & Dune Buggy
43 Lincoln Rd.
Outpost Café
1014 Fulton St.
Blackbird Café
197 Bedford Ave.
'sNice Café
315 Fifth Ave.
Purity Diner
43 Underhill Ave.

- Brooklyn Public Library Bedford Branch
496 Franklin St.
- BRONX**
Brook Park
141st St. & Brook Ave.
Mothers on the Move
928 Intervale Ave.
The Point
940 Garrison Ave.
New York Public Library Mott Haven Library
321 E. 140th St.
- STATEN ISLAND**
St. George Library
5 Central Ave.
Port Richmond Branch Library
75 Bennett St.
Dot Com Cafe
36 Bay St.
Everything Goes Book Café
208 Bay St.

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Phone: 212-904-1282
E-mail: contact@indypendent.org

UPCOMING EVENTS

SAT MAY 21 • 9AM
CLASS: EDUCATION FOR LIBERATION: AN INTRODUCTION TO PAULO FRIERE'S CONCEPTS & TECHNIQUES. This is an introductory two-day, hands-on workshop in the use of popular education concepts and techniques. Co-sponsored by the Institute for Popular Education.
Sliding scale: \$68-\$85

WED MAY 25 • 7:30PM
BOOK LAUNCH & DISCUSSION: THE POLITICS OF INDEBTEDNESS. In this timely book, cultural critic Richard Dienst considers the financial crisis, global poverty, media politics and radical theory to parse the various implications of a world where man is born free but everywhere is in debt. Jeremy Glick, Randy Martin and Bruce Robbins will also speak. Co-sponsored by Verso Books.
Sliding scale: \$6/\$10/\$15

SAT MAY 28 • 10AM-6PM
CLASS: THREE-DAY WORKSHOP: INVISIBLE THEATER. Invisible Theater is one of the techniques of the Theater of the Oppressed, in which "actors" create "theatrical" situations in public places. Come learn more about radical theatrical techniques at this workshop, led by Marie-Claire Picher and co-sponsored by Theater of the Oppressed Laboratory.
Sliding scale: \$135-\$195

THE BRECHT FORUM
BUILDING A MOVEMENT THAT MOVES
451 West Street
(btwn Bank and Bethune)



SAT JUNE 4
5-8pm • \$75
BENEFIT: ECOFEST AND CELEBRATION BY THE EAST RIVER. Join the Lower East Side Ecology Center in their annual Ecofest benefit to celebrate their accomplishments this year and to help make another year possible. The evening will feature delicious gourmet seasonal treats from local chefs as well as music by the Lucky Chops Brass Band.
East River Park Amphitheater
212-477-4022 • leseecologycenter.org

SUN JUNE 5
10am-4pm • Free
RALLY: OUR PLANET, THEIRS TOO. In commemoration of the billions of animals that die each year from human cruelty, there will be a requiem ceremony in Union Square followed by an afternoon festival of food, displays and other attractions.
Union Square • ourplanetnyc.org

THU JUNE 9
9pm • Free
FILM: *BATTLE FOR BROOKLYN*. Enjoy documentary cinema in the great outdoors with Rooftop Films, a Brooklyn-based film program screening movies throughout the summer. *Battle For Brooklyn* follows the struggles of Brooklyn community members fighting the massive development project, Atlantic Yards, and the company behind it, Forest City Ratner. This screening is in partnership with the Brooklyn Film Festival.
Fort Greene Park
718-417-7362 • rooftopfilms.com

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Osama Bin Laden, Notorious Networker, Dead at 54

BY ARUN GUPTA

He terrified millions with the September 11 attacks that killed thousands of Americans. He inspired millions of others for striking at Western powers. But for the “world’s most wanted terrorist,” killed by U.S. forces on May 2 in Pakistan, his enduring legacy may have been summed up by the tweeter who asked, “Who the fuck is Osama bin Laden?”

Mr. Bin Laden had dropped from view in recent years, reduced to basking in past glories in a secluded villa in an exclusive suburb, not unlike his death-dealing partner, George W. Bush, currently believed to be lurking in a high-walled compound in a fundamentalist belt near Dallas, Texas.

President Obama announced the Al Qaeda leader’s death in a dramatic late-night address May 1. Showing the world that when the Sony Playstation network goes down America is still capable of achieving great things, elite U.S. forces stormed Mr. Bin Laden’s compound at night, losing the element of surprise, crashing only one super-secret stealthy helicopter and taking 40 minutes to complete the task of executing the unarmed terrorist leader, thus ensuring no one will ever know to what extent he was funded by the CIA decades ago.

The President said Mr. Bin Laden was buried at sea, keeping with U.S. policy of stoking the ravings of conspiracy theorists who, having already determined that the

“airplanes” which struck the World Trade Center on 9/11 were really computer-generated holograms, are now bent on proving that the post-plastic surgery Bristol Palin is a cleverly disguised Mr. Bin Laden.

Following news of Mr. Bin Laden’s death, Americans lacking jobs, healthcare and a sense of positive self-identity poured into the streets in a ritualistic frenzy of home-team triumphalism marked by horn honking, public drunkenness and crowds trying to recall all the words to chants of “U.S.A.! U.S.A.!”

For President Obama the bullet to the head of Mr. Bin Laden was the first shot of his re-election campaign. Mr. Obama’s message to voters will be “We Do Big Things,” contrasting himself from Republicans by his determination to commit extrajudicial assassinations, launch illegal wars, expand offshore oil drilling, bail out investment banks, spy on Americans, undermine treaties on climate change, cut taxes for the wealthy, torture detainees, bash public sector unions and slash spending on health, education and pensions.

But asking Americans to recall Mr. Bin Laden in 2012 may prove too taxing for a public more capable of naming Snow



White’s seven dwarves than the Supreme Court’s nine justices.

White’s seven dwarves than the Supreme Court’s nine justices.

Indeed, while Mr. Bin Laden was consumed by his own myth — a liberator of Muslim lands, a warrior battling infidels, a benefactor of Islamist guerrillas — he was ultimately a petty war criminal who made a name for himself as a freelance murderer but paled next to IMF and State Depart-

ment functionaries that consign nations to oblivion with the stroke of a pen. His achievements came in other realms. Al Qaeda pre-figured lucrative social networking sites like Facebook, but Mr. Bin Laden was unable to monetize it apparently due to a lack of hoodies and ironic t-shirts. He was a pioneer in “asynchronous communications,” low-budget videos broadcast from caves literal and figurative, portending fire and torment for his enemies, a technique now employed by other tyrannical fanatics from Muhammad Gaddafi to Sarah Palin.

His masterminding of 9/11 boosted everything from for-profit mercenary companies, blinkered American nationalism and Lee Greenwood’s flailing career to snack food sales, bloviating Islamophobes and Chinese manufacturers of tiny American flags. His impact also led to the creation of 216,000 Homeland Security jobs and was ultimately responsible for catch phrases like, “Don’t touch my junk!”

Mr. Bin Laden was 54, and leaves behind six wives, lots of children, scattered bands of dour, violent followers and one unbelievably fucked-up world.

Thanks, Ryan!

More than eight years and 130 issues later, Ryan Dunsmuir is stepping down as one of *The Independent*’s key designers.

Dunsmuir first joined the newspaper in 2003 after previously doing design work for newspapers in California. Since then, *The Independent* has won six awards from the New York Community Media Alliance for outstanding design, all in 1st or 2nd place.

“When I went to the first *Indy* meeting, I was impressed with how smart everyone was, and the quality of the content, but it was also pretty obvious the paper could use a little design love,” Dunsmuir says.

Arun Gupta, who currently serves as the newspaper’s General Manager and is one of the newspaper’s founding editors, notes Dunsmuir’s design skills and work ethic.

“Ryan was a terrific designer as evidenced by her many awards, a pleasure to work with and an incredibly hard worker. She would often stay up all night, helping put an issue of *The Independent* to bed, and then, without going to bed herself, put in a full day at her regular job,” Gupta says.

Another *Independent* designer, Anna Gold, took a break from design work in December 2010, and she and Sam Alcott welcomed a new addition to their family, Arthur Lawrence Bayano Alcott, in early February.



Steven Arnerich and Mikael Tarkela, a recent addition to the design team, are currently the force behind designing each issue of the newspaper.

Arnerich, who has been doing design work with *The Independent* for the past four years, greatly enjoyed working with Dunsmuir.

“I’ve worked with more designers than I can

count—Ryan is that rare one that always has a clear and direct expression; her solutions rest on deep aesthetic principle. And she is such a good soul,” Arnerich says.

John Tarleton, who worked as the General Coordinator at *The Independent* from 2001 to 2009, credits Dunsmuir’s patience with getting the staff through many stressful closing nights.

“Ryan’s fortitude and her grace under pressure always kept us on track. Her skills as a designer made the paper beautiful,” Tarleton says.

While Dunsmuir looks forward to having more time to focus on her own work, she will always remember her time at *The Independent* fondly.

“It might be weird to say I feel lucky to have worked insane hours unpaid for most of the years I lived in NYC, but somehow I do,” Dunsmuir says.

Music for Healing



LEGENDS: Pete Seeger (left) and Peter Yarrow (right) of Peter, Paul and Mary perform at a May 13 benefit concert for fellow folk musician Anne Feeney who is recovering from small cell lung cancer. Called “the best labor singer in North America” by Utah Phillips, Feeney is the author of eight solo albums including “Have You Been to Jail for Justice?” and “Dump the Bosses Off Your Back”. Held at Local 1199’s auditorium in Midtown, the concert also featured the New York City Labor Chorus (foreground) and the Brooklyn Women’s Chorus (background). For more information, see annefeeney.com.

CORRECTION: The illustration credit for “Egypt’s Army and Muslim Brothers Join in a Dance of Power,” in the April 27 issue misspelled the name of the illustrator, Julie Laquer.

New Yorkers Unite to Fight the Rich BUT CAN THEY WIN?

By JOHN TARLETON

Mayor Michael Bloomberg has carried out \$5.4 billion in budget cuts since the economic crisis hit in 2008. The victims of our mayor's bean counting have been among the city's most vulnerable residents: homebound seniors, children at risk of being abused or neglected, summer job participants, immigrants taking English classes.

When Bloomberg proposes his budget cuts, public sector unions, community-based organizations and advocacy groups are typically drawn into a zero-sum game in which each group lobbies its City Council allies to protect its interests from cuts when a final budget deal is struck with the mayor. Holding a press conference on the steps of City Hall or a small, noisy rally on the sidewalk just outside of City Hall is an almost obligatory ritual.

On May 12, several unions and scores of community-based organizations and advocacy groups broke with the usual script. In doing so, they provided a tantalizing glimpse into the possibilities for building a broad-based resistance movement against the mayor's drive to impose austerity on ordinary New Yorkers.

Facing another, deeper round of budget cuts in the mayor's proposed budget (see sidebar), the coalition mobilized 20,000 demonstrators who poured into the financial district in a swirling, carnivalesque protest that targeted Wall Street and the nation's six biggest banks. Three years after crashing the economy, the Big 6 (Goldman Sachs, JPMorgan Chase, Morgan Stanley, Citigroup, Bank of America and Wells Fargo) are raking in combined profits of over \$199 million per day.

"Give the money back, and create some

decent fucking jobs," said Jacob Macall, 29, of Astoria, Queens. "How the fuck are people supposed to live off of \$9 an hour or \$7 an hour in a city that is this expensive?"

The May 12 mobilization was the largest and most militant to date in a growing series of actions (see timeline) in New York against economic policies that redistribute wealth upward to the super-rich while punishing the poor and working classes. Among the protesters' demands was that

Bloomberg support a campaign to have New York state renew a tax surcharge on the top 3 percent of income earners, which would bring hundreds of millions of dollars into city coffers.

The protest was composed of eight feeder marches organized around themes such as education, housing, human services, jobs and immigration. The marches began at various locations in Lower Manhattan, converging at Wall and Water Streets at the bottom of the financial district. Seven of the eight marches did not have permits though the largest one — led by the United Federation of Teachers (UFT) — did. For New Yorkers who have chafed for years at being herded into protest pens by the NYPD, the sense of liberation was palpable.

"It was great," said Marcia Newfield, an adjunct lecturer at the Borough of Manhattan Community College. "You would



ANDREW STERN



ANDREW STERN

SIGNS OF THE TIMES: David Solnit (second from right), co-founder of Art & Revolution, consults with local artists he teamed up with to produce hundreds of handmade visuals for the May 12 demonstration. (Top) A woman dances at the end of the protest.

be marching down one street in the financial district, turn a corner and be joined by another march. You could feel the crowd getting larger and the solidarity growing stronger."

"When you pen people in, you confine and you squash their militancy. And what you need to do is the opposite," said Mark Torres, a public school teacher and parent activist from Harlem. "You've got to unleash . . . people's creativity and unleash the power for us to take the streets and to make a change in the city."

The demonstration featured open-air teach-ins about the economy, stilt walkers and stirring musical scores from the Rude Mechanical Orchestra marching band. A team of artists produced hundreds of colorful handmade flags, banners and placards. For many, it was their first encounter with the freewheeling style of mass protest that

BY THE NUMBERS

Percentage of Income Earned by the Top 1%

U.S. (1976):	9%
U.S. (2009):	24%
NY State (2007):	35%
NY City (2007):	44%

Sources: Fiscal Policy Institute, Slate

last came to prominence at the 1999 Seattle World Trade Organization (WTO) demonstrations and became a signature of the alter-globalization movement that flourished briefly a decade ago. This escalation in tactics was not a coincidence as two of the

RESISTING AUSTERITY

Feb. 26: 2,000 union members rally at City Hall Park in support of Wisconsin State Capitol occupation.

March 23: 33 faculty, staff and students from the City University of New York make headlines across the state after they are arrested for blockading the entrance to Gov. Andrew Cuomo's office in the State Capitol.

March 30–31: More than 500 protesters from several NYC community groups occupy the State Capitol in Albany while legislators rush behind locked doors to pass a budget that mandates billions in cuts for vital social programs while allowing the millionaire's tax, a surcharge on high-income earners to expire.

April 9: 10,000 union members hold a "We Are One" rally in Times Square in support of worker rights. On the same day, several thousand antiwar protesters gather in Union Square and connect the cost of fighting three wars in the Middle East to budget cuts at home.

May 1: Thousands of immigrants and union members rally and march in Manhattan for worker and immigrant rights.

May 12: 20,000 people march on Wall Street.

main Seattle WTO organizers, Lisa Fithian and David Solnit, were brought in by unions to help catalyze the event.

So, now what?

Inspired in part by recent uprisings in Wisconsin, Egypt and Tunisia, the May 12 action suggested new possibilities for building massive opposition to Bloomberg's austerity agenda. But, will it turn out to be a one-off event? Or is May 12 something that its organizers will build on? And if so, to what end?

Another coalition, New Yorkers Against the Budget Cuts (NYABC), which led a smaller march on Wall Street on March 24, is calling for a mobilization that will be held

at City Hall on either June 25 or June 26, days before the July 1 deadline for concluding a budget. NYABC also plans to hold community forums in June in the Bronx, Queens and Brooklyn as a part of a citywide outreach effort.

"We want to be in a position to sway the vote or stop it," said Yotam Marom of the Organization for a Free Society, one of a number of small left groups that make up NYABC. "It's going to be a real showdown. We want to have a critical mass of people from different backgrounds be strong enough to say, 'We're not leaving until this

budget is dead.'"

It remains uncertain whether the unions and more mainstream progressive community organizations that came out en masse for May 12 would mobilize for another mass demonstration and/or make common cause with their more radical colleagues.

"They [the May 12 coalition] weren't planning ahead," said a source close to the leadership of one of the city's largest unions. "The time to be planning the next big action is now not in June."

Assuming the May 12 coalition remains intact — the UFT has a long history of opportunism and could always cut a separate deal with the mayor — there's no indication yet that the member groups are planning to step out of well-worn grooves. Staging a spirited fightback against Bloomberg's budget cuts or engaging in targeted corporate campaigns against bad actors such as JPMorgan Chase and Walmart is one thing. Building a broad-based, truly independent mass movement that breaks with both the Democrats and the Republicans and presses fundamental demands about how power is exercised in New York and in whose interest is quite another.

For now, said Marom, who also has organized with the May 12 coalition, the overriding priority is to stop Bloomberg's budget cuts and the damage they could do to communities across the city. However, he noted, building the grassroots power to win the budget battle could have longer-term benefits as well.

"If we can win on this budget, we can be in a position in the future to make demands for things we haven't had yet . . . But if we lose on the budget, then we're in the same place."

Jaisal Noor contributed to this report. For more information, see onmay12.org and nocutsny.wordpress.com.

FIVE WAYS TO AVOID BUDGET CUTS

- * Restore the state's millionaire's tax and hundreds of millions of dollars would flow into city coffers.
- * Tap into the city's projected \$3.2 billion surplus
- * End three property tax exemption programs that cost the city \$2 billion a year. Two of these exemptions are up for renewal in Albany this year.
- * Reduce police overtime, currently clocking in at \$538 million a year, or almost 12 percent of the NYPD's 2011 budget.
- * Reduce expenses in the central office of the Department of Education, which is slated to add 218 positions and spend more than \$75 million on contracts for computer services and administrative personnel services.

Sources: Strong Economy For All, Independent Budget Office



ANDREW STERN



MAY 18 - JUNE 7, 2011 THE INDEPENDENT 5 SANDERS/DAVID

GO WHERE THE MONEY IS: (Above) Scores of community groups joined the demonstration in the financial district.

NET LOSSES: (Top Left) Police use orange netting to push back protesters who try to occupy the intersection at Wall and Water Streets.

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—AMY GOODMAN,
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SAT, MAY 21, 7PM • \$5 SUGG

PRESENTATION: CONVERSATIONS WITH THE EARTH: INDIGENOUS PEOPLES AND CLIMATE CHANGE. Each May Indigenous leaders from around the world gather together to discuss the fate of Mother Earth and her Peoples at the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues. Bluestockings welcomes the Land is Life delegation for an evening of discussion and short films made by Indigenous communities about climate change.

SUN, MAY 29, 7PM • FREE

READING: WILL POTTER, GREEN IS THE NEW RED. Join journalist and blogger Will Potter for a conversation about environmentalism and “Eco-Terrorism.”

MON, JUNE 6, 7PM • FREE

READING: LINDA STOUT, COLLECTIVE VISIONING: HOW GROUPS CAN WORK TOGETHER FOR A JUST AND SUSTAINABLE FUTURE. Author Linda Stout, a life-long agent of social justice, discusses her new book, a complete guide for leaders seeking to create inclusive movements that work from a place of hope to create a better, more just tomorrow.

Youth in Revolt



‘TIME BOMB’: High youth unemployment is a major factor in the current wave of protests and revolts across the world.

BY COSTAS PANAYOTAKIS

One great irony of the youth-led revolt in the Arab world is that the two shining successes, Tunisia and Egypt, were previously stellar examples of neoliberal policy.

Egypt had made the World Bank’s top 10 “Reformers” list for four of the last five years. IMF Director (and accused rapist) Dominique Strauss-Kahn praised Tunisia in 2008 as a “good example for emerging countries.”

But the inability of an economic model based on privatization, deregulation and liberalization of capital to provide for youth and the population in general has only been magnified by the global economic crisis. Neoliberalism thus created the very agents of social revolution that toppled Western-backed dictators in Tunisia and Egypt.

So while the Arab Spring of peaceful mass protests has given way to a bloody summer, youth protest is not likely to subside any time soon or remain confined to the Arab world. That’s because global capitalism today cannot provide young people with the kind of bright future they want and deserve. Adding to the pain is the lack of even a semblance of democratic institutions in most countries.

According to the International Labor Organization, youth unemployment in most of the world hovers around 20 percent with “young people ... nearly three times as likely as adults to be unemployed.” In Tunisia, 46 percent of college degree holders lack jobs in their field. In Egypt, the Ministry of Investment was reduced to advertising to foreign capital the availability of 325,000 university graduates who enter the job market every year. In Nigeria, the youth unemployment rate is estimated at 49 percent, leading one journalist there to call it “a time bomb waiting to explode.” In Italy the unemployment rate among youth is 28 percent, in France 25 percent and in Spain 40 percent. In the United States, the official unemployment rate among youth aged 16 to 24 is 19 percent, but the real rate is at least 25 percent.

Having caused widespread youth unemployment, neoliberalism’s architects then use it as a pretext for “reforms” that gut labor protections and rights, ensuring that young people who do find some work will be faced with intensified exploitation. *The New York Times* offers the case of Southern Europe, where businesses “are loath to hire new workers on a fulltime basis, so young people are increasingly offered unpaid or low-paying internships, traineeships or tem-

porary contracts that do not offer the same benefits and protections.”

Many unemployed and underemployed youth are highly educated, and not only in Arab countries and Southern Europe, where “the most highly educated generation in the history of the Mediterranean hits one of its worst job markets,” according to the *Times*. Even in dynamic capitalist economies like China, the number of college graduates has been growing much faster than the labor market can absorb them. With numbers of young people feeling left out of their own future, youth protest is on the rise in Europe and the United States. Reporter Peter Coy writes in *BusinessWeek* that the specter of such protest haunted the 2011 World Economic Forum. The conference halls were filled “with can-do talk about improving employment opportunities for the young,” but Coy soberly admits, “[c]hronic youth unemployment may not be fixable.”

Another factor in youth protest in the West, beyond the systemic lack of work, is the question of access to and quality of higher education. Coy writes, “In the most-developed nations, the job market has split between high-paying jobs that many workers aren’t qualified for and low-paying jobs that they can’t live on.” More funding and opportunities for higher education might address the gap, but government policy in Europe and North America points in the opposite direction. Political elites are imposing austerity and neoliberal reforms to make the young, like working people, pay for a crisis they did not cause. The rich get bailouts designed to rescue the value of stocks and bonds, and youth get much higher tuition fees for an education that is declining in quality as budget cuts take a bite.

Across Europe free higher education is becoming a thing of the past even as student enrollment has surged in the last decade. Last December, Conservatives in England tripled the cap on tuition, while Italy’s right-wing Berlusconi government cut \$425 million from the university system, which students protested by occupying the Leaning Tower of Pisa and the Coliseum in Rome. Many other European countries are initiating the same process of gradual privatization that has been unfolding in the United States for decades.

The creeping privatization of higher education in the United States has led to record student loan debt levels of \$830 billion, exceeding total credit card debt. Writing at *CommonDreams.org*, researchers Alan Nasser and Kelly Norman note the debt is

“growing at the rate of \$90 billion a year” and only “40 percent of that debt is actively being repaid.” They warn student loan debt may become the next bubble to burst, further complicating any economic recovery. Far from addressing this issue, austerity policies aggravate it.

As Americans lose their jobs and see their income decline, they find that public colleges are filled to capacity even as they continue to increase tuition. Many students turn to for-profit colleges that often prey on students from minority backgrounds, charging high tuition rates for programs that often lead to lower-paying jobs than those available to public college graduates. As a result, students attending for-profit colleges are far more likely to default on student loans than those attending public higher education institutions.

The first major protests against the economic crisis in the United States involved University of California students resisting austerity policies. In September 2009 students, faculty and staff organized walkouts and strikes at the 10-campus system after being hit with layoffs, cuts and 32 percent tuition hikes. In Wisconsin, it was a student walkout in Madison that sparked the massive worker resistance there and around the country. Remarkably, students at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee engaged in a 66-day occupation against cuts and fee increases to the state system before being evicted May 7.

Dramatic battles have taken place in Puerto Rico, where public university students protesting austerity shut down 10 of the 11 campuses last year. Right-wing Gov. Luís Fortuño upped the ante last December by imposing a tuition increase of more than 50 percent and sending in police to occupy the main campus in San Juan. This led to more occupations, a faculty and staff strike, and a public protest of more than 15,000 that led to the police withdrawal in February.

The solidarity among young people, students and workers has been central to growing movements in Europe, the Arab world and North America. Faced with a bleak future, young people the world over are debunking the myth that they are apathetic and politically immature.

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The Zapatistas Return Amid Failed Drug War

BY MICHAEL McCAUGHAN

SAN CRISTOBAL, Mexico—This nation is caught in the grip of an escalating drug war that has cost 40,000 lives in the past five years. The daily body count varies but is usually measured in the dozens. Methods of extermination range from decapitation and mutilation to asphyxiation and a bullet in the head. Most Mexicans have become numbed to the extreme cruelty and hope they don't get swept up in the river of blood.

Once in a while, however, a single incident can trigger a powerful reaction. Juan Francisco Sicilia was one of seven friends found bound and murdered on March 28 south of Mexico City, with evidence pointing to a drug cartel. His killing has sparked a national mobilization and a new movement aimed at shifting government policy away from perpetual warfare and toward an integrated political solution.

Javier Sicilia, poet and father of Juan Francisco, launched "The March for Peace with Justice and Dignity," a three-day event that culminated in a rally in Mexico City. The idea was simple – a silent march and a single slogan: "*Estamos hasta la madre,*

no mas sangre." "We've had it up to here, no more bloodshed." This idea captured the popular imagination and on May 8 hundreds of thousands of people marched all over Mexico demanding a radical change to government policy.

In southeast Mexico, the Zapatista National Liberation Army (EZLN) answered the call and announced their plan to march into San Cristobal de las Casas on May 7, the town where the Zapatistas first appeared in January 1994. It has been five years since the Zapatistas last mobilized in this manner, and many people remember the movement as a noble insurrection that inspired millions but ultimately fizzled out, victim of a bitter debate over the pitfalls and possibilities of electoral politics.

The return of the Zapatistas to San Cristobal thus seemed like a reckoning. Could the Zapatistas match the years when they could gather more than 10,000 masked rebels to occupy the city, watched by nervous local elite who pulled the shutters down and held their breath till the *indios* left?

Since 2006 the Zapatistas have consolidated their autonomous rule across five "caracoles," self-governing councils whose

delegates take turns to "be the government," learning the ropes before passing the torch to delegates from another village. The goal is to allow many people to learn how to "be the government" without giving birth to a professional, bureaucratic political class.

The Zapatistas have also largely severed ties with visiting NGOs and no longer encourage foreigners to visit their communities. Thousands of outsiders, trekking in to jungle communities to learn how to make revolution, came in good faith. They served as an important buffer against army and paramilitary forces in the late 90s, but they also disrupted daily life and generated inequalities and jealousy as gifts and money were left behind.

When May 7 arrived, San Cristobal was drenched in warm sunshine and an air of expectancy filled the main square where TV crews jostled for position in front of an improvised stage. The Zapatistas arrived in a long, winding trail of men and women of all ages, each one wearing a ski mask that bore a number representing the caracole from which they came. The square quickly filled to overflowing, and by the time the Zapatista *comandantes* opened the event with Mexico's national anthem, the rebels had al-

ready won a major victory by organizing the biggest march San Cristobal has ever seen. Some 20,000 rebels were present, bringing with them the fragrant aroma of corn and wood smoke, and the elusive element of community cohesion, described by one analyst as "the sacred fire of the movement." Getting that many rebels to San Cristobal was an enormous effort as each community was in charge of its own transport and food at a time when corn, rice and beans are scarce.

The Zapatistas have an ambivalent relationship with the rest of Mexico. "Here we are," their silence seems to say. "We have territory and self rule in our small corner of the country, what have you done?"

The images of Javier Sicilia, a lone individual leading a march of the indignant and the impotent in Mexico City, contrasted sharply with *Zapatismo*. The rebels moved as one, arriving and leaving in formation, sharing transport and territory. This cohesion is amplified by the shared "means of production," the *milpa* or cornfield that forms the basis for survival across regional and linguistic boundaries.

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South Sudan and the African Experience

THE QUEST FOR A NEW POLITICAL ORDER

BY MAHMOOD MAMDANI

Editor's Note: Named as one of the "Top 20 Public Intellectuals" by both Foreign Policy (U.S.) and Prospect (U.K.) magazine in 2008, Mahmood Mamdani writes on the intersection between politics and culture, colonialism, the history of civil war and genocide in Africa, the Cold War and the War on Terror, and the history and theory of human rights.

In the following article, based on a talk at Uganda's Makerere University in March, Professor Mamdani explores many of these issues in relation to Africa's newest nation, South Sudan. In a January 2011 referendum, some 99 percent of voters endorsed the creation of South Sudan, which is slated to achieve formal independence on July 9, 2011.

On page 11, The Independent has provided a reference guide for some of the key names, organizations and events discussed in this article.

Whatever one's point of view, it is difficult to deny that the referendum held in January 2011 on South Sudan — unity or independence — was a historic moment. Self-determination marks the founding of a new political order. Nationalists may try to convince us that the outcome of the referendum, independence, is the natural destiny of the people of South Sudan. But there is nothing natural about any political outcome.

Consider, for example, who is the self in what we know as self-determination? In 1956, when Sudan became independent, that self was the people of Sudan. Today, in 2011, when South Sudan will become independent, that self is the people of South Sudan.

That self, in both cases, is a political self. It is a historical self, not a metaphysical self as nationalists are prone to think. When nationalists write a history, they give the past a present. In doing so, they tend to make the present eternal. As the present changes, so does the past. This is why we are always re-writing the past.

Now, the referendum is a moment of self-determination. Not every people gets this opportunity. If the opportunity comes, it is once in several generations. It comes at a great price paid in blood, in political violence. Many have died to make possible this moment of self-determination. Let us begin by acknowledging this sacrifice, which sig-

nifies this historical moment.

Rather than tread on firm ground, I want to pose a set of questions to serve as guidelines to how we may think of South Sudan in the days and months and years ahead.

One: How should those committed to Pan-African unity understand the emergence of a new state, an independent South Sudan? What does it teach us about the political process of creating unity?

Two: As we write the history of self-determination, how will we write the history of relations between the North and the South, as the history of one people colonizing another or as a history with different, even contradictory, possibilities?

Third: How did the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA), historically a champion of unity of Sudan, a New Sudan, come to demand an independent state?

Finally: Now that the SPLA's political project has changed to the creation of a new state, this raises a different question: Will the South establish a new political order, or will it reproduce a version of the old political order, such as the old state we know as Sudan? Will independence lead to peace or will peace be but an interlude awaiting a more appropriate antidote to ongoing political violence in Sudan?

AFRICAN UNITY

Like the self, unity does not develop in linear fashion, in a straight line, from lower to higher levels, as if it were unfolding according to a formula. This is because political unity is the outcome of political struggles, not of utopian blueprints. Anyone interested in creating unity must recognize the importance of politics and persuasion and thus the inevitability of a non-linear process.

We often say that imperialism divided the continent. I suggest we rethink this platitude. Historically, empires have united peoples by force. France created two great political units in Africa: French Equatorial Africa and French West Africa. Britain created two great federations — the Central African Federation and the East African Federation — and it created Sudan.

These great political units split up, but that division was not at the moment of colonialism, rather it occurred at the moment of independence. This was for one reason: the people in question saw these political arrangements as so many shackles and struggled to break free of them.

Unity can be created by different, even contradictory, means — it can be created by

force, and it can be created by choice. This is why we need to distinguish between different kinds of unities: unity through bondage and unity through freedom. This is why a democratic position on African unity is not necessarily incompatible with a democratic right to separation, just as the democratic right to union in marriage is not incompatible with a democratic right to divorce.

The Organization of African Unity (OAU) had two provisions in its charter: the sovereignty of all states, and the right of all peoples to self-determination. Most observers saw these as contradictory. I suggest we revise this judgment in retrospect.

SELF DETERMINATION

We need to rethink the relation between sovereignty and self-determination. Sovereignty is the relation of the state to other states, to external powers, whereas self-determination is an internal relation of the state to the people. In a democratic context, self-determination should be seen as the pre-requisite to sovereignty.

There are, in the postcolonial history of Africa, two great examples of self-determination, of the creation of a new state from a previously independent African state: Eritrea was the first, separating from Ethiopia in 1993; South Sudan is the second. No state in history has agreed to cessation of a part. Cessation is always forced on a state. This is why we need to ask a question in both cases: how was cessation possible?

Eritrean self-determination was the outcome of two important developments, internal and external. Internally, it was the outcome of a struggle lasting nearly four decades, culminating in a military victory over the Mengistu Haile Mariam regime, known as the Derg. Externally, the relevant factor was the end of the Cold War.

The referendum on Eritrean independence was notable for one reason. In spite of the close relation between Eritrean and Ethiopian armed movements, the Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF) and the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF), and their joint victory over the Ethiopian empire state in 1991, the Eritrean people voted overwhelmingly in 1993 to establish a separate and independent state.

In South Sudan, self-determination is the result of a different combination of developments. Internally, there was no military victory; instead, there was a military stalemate between the North and the South. So how



MARLENA BUCZEK SMITH

did South Sudan win its political objective — independence — in the absence of a military victory? Until now, this remains an unanswered question.

My answer is provisional. In the case of South Sudan, the external factor was more decisive. That external factor was 9/11 and, following it, U.S. invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq. In my view, it is only this factor, the real grip of post-9/11 fear, the fear that it will be the next target of U.S. aggression, that explains the agreement of the government in the North to include a provision for a referendum in the South in the 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA).

The result of the referendum could not

have been in doubt. It would have been clear to anyone with a historical understanding of the issues involved and of the experience of the process leading to Eritrean independence that the referendum would lead to an overwhelming popular vote for an independent state in the South.

Why then did the power in the North agree to a referendum? My answer is: the

end of a colonial relationship? This is indeed how one tendency in South Sudan thinks of independence, just as some who called for Eritrean independence spoke of Ethiopia as a colonial master. The analogy is misleading for at least one reason. Whereas the colonial power left the region, North and South will always be neighbors.

You can leave your marriage partner, but

you cannot leave your neighbor. Neighbors have a history, and that history overlaps geographical boundaries. Though North and South are distinct geographies, they have overlapping histories. I would like to highlight key developments in that history.

The first development was that of migrations, both voluntary and forced. Let us begin with voluntary migrations.

THE ROLE OF ISLAM

One interesting example takes place in the period before Western colonialism, even before the regional slave trade, when the Shilluk migrated from the South. From among the Shilluk rose the royal house of the Funj, with a sultanate that had its capital at Sinnar. As it expanded, the sultanate raided the South for slaves, mainly for slave soldiers. For reasons that need to be explored further, colonial historians have termed these raids the Arab slave trade.

The Sultanate of the Funj was the first Muslim state in the history of Sudan. Sinnar ended a thousand-year history of Christian states in the North, demolishing Christian states in the region and inaugurating the political history of Islam in Sudan. Given the conventional understanding that equates Islam with the North and Christianity with the South, we should remember that political power in the North, in Nubia and Beja, was Christian — and that the royal family of the first Muslim state in Sudan came from the South, not the North.

In contrast, Islam came to the North in the form of refugees and merchants, not royals or soldiers.

The migrations that we know of better were forced migrations, slavery. The South plundered for slaves from the 17th century onward with the formation of the Sultanate of the Funj along the Nile and the Sultanate of Darfur in the west. But the slave trade became intense only in late 18th century when the Caribbean plantation economy was transplanted to Indian Ocean islands.

The rise of a plantation slave economy has a number of consequences. Prior to it, the demand for slaves came mainly from the state; it was a demand for slave-soldiers. As slave plantations were developed in the Indian Ocean islands, in Reunion and Mauritius and other places, the demand shifted from the state to the market. The scale of the demand also increased dramatically.

Nonetheless, most of those enslaved in the South stayed in Darfur and Sinnar as slave-soldiers. Most of those in Darfur became Fur. Most of those in Sinnar became Arab. They were culturally assimilated — mostly by consent but the kind of consent that is manufactured through relations of force. For a parallel, think of how African slaves in North America became English-speaking Westerners — thereby taking on the cultural identity of their masters.

This history should disturb our simple moral world in a second way: some of the

Arabs in the North are descendents of slaves from the South.

The second great historical development that has shaped relations between North and South in Sudan is that of anti-colonial nationalism. The event that marks the hallmark of anti-colonial nationalism is the *Mahdiyya*, the great Sudanese revolt against British-Ottoman rule, known as the Turkiyya. Led by Mohamed Abdulla, the Mahdi, this late-19th-century rebellion was, after the 1857 Indian Uprising, the greatest revolt to shake the British Empire. With its firm social base in Darfur and Kordofan, the Mahdiyya spread first to the rest of northern Sudan, and then to the Dinka of Abyei, the area along the present-day border between South and North Sudan. The Dinka said the Spirit of Deng had caught the *Mabdi*.

Modern Sudanese nationalism begins in the 1920s with what has come to be known as the White Flag revolt. It was spearheaded by Southern officers in the colonial army, and marks the turning point in colonial policy in Sudan, when British power decided to quarantine the South from the North. This is how North and South came to be artificially separated in the colonial period, with permission required to cross boundaries. This kind of separation is, however, not unusual in the history of colonialism — Karamoja too was a quarantined district in colonial Uganda.

The third point is key: an even worse fate met the people of South Sudan after independence. A state-enforced national project unfolded in Sudan, at first as enforced Arabization, later as enforced Islamization.

This — rather than the colonial period — is the real context of the armed liberation struggle in the South, for the fact is that it did not take long for both the political class and the popular classes in the South to realize that the independence of Sudan had worsened the political and social situation of the South, rather than improved it.

FROM NEW SUDAN TO INDEPENDENCE

The Sudan People's Liberation Army's political program was not an independent South; it was a liberated Sudan. The SPLA did not call for the creation of a new state, but for the reform of the existing state. The demand for a New Sudan was the basis of a political alliance between the SPLA and the political opposition in Khartoum. It was the basis on which the SPLA expanded the struggle from the South to border areas.

After SPLA leader John Garang signed the Comprehensive Peace Agreement and returned to Khartoum in July 2005, more than a million people turned out to receive him. They represented the entire diversity of Sudan — from North to South and east to west. They included speakers of Arabic and other Sudanese languages. Many drew comparisons with the return of Robert Mugabe to Harare. Garang's return was a shock

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across the political spectrum, especially to the political class in the North.

This historical survey underlines the fact that there is not a one-dimensional history of Northern oppression of the South. True, Northern domination is the main story, especially after independence. But there was a subsidiary story: the story of joint North-South struggle against that domination.

If the SPLA had participated in the Sudanese elections in 2010, it would most likely have won — whether led by Garang, Salva Kir, or Yassir Arman. Ironically, then, precisely when the SPLA was on the verge of realizing its historic goal of power in the whole of Sudan, it gave up the goal and called for an independent South.

WHY?

Part of the answer lies in the orientation of the political leadership, especially after the death of Garang. The SPLA was a movement with a strong leader — the weaker the organization, the more difference the death of one individual makes.

The history of liberation movements in this region testifies to this fact. It should also remind us that it is not unusual for strong leaders to be eliminated towards the close of an armed struggle. Remember the Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU) and the killing of Josiah Tongogara in 1979 on the eve of its victory; The African National Congress (ANC) and the assassination of Chris Hani in 1993, also on the eve of victory; and the SPLA and the death of Garang soon after his return to Khartoum.

It is worth comparing the SPLA with the ANC. Both were successful in undermining the attempt of ruling regimes to turn the struggle into a racial or religious contest. The ANC succeeded in recruiting important individuals from white population, such as Joe Slovo and Ronnie Kassrell. Similarly, the SPLA included key cadre from the Arab population like Mansour Khaled and Yassir Arman. The difference between them is also important: Whereas the line that called for unity, for a non-racial South Africa, won in the ANC, the line that called for a New Sudan was defeated in the SPLA.

In both cases the forces representing unity and those representing separation contested each other throughout the history of the struggle. In South Africa this was the difference between the ANC and the Pan-Africanist Congress of Azania. In the case of South Sudan, the two lines were represented by the SPLA and Anya Nya II, a successor to a rebel group from Sudan's first civil war. The first called for a New Sudan, the latter for an independent South Sudan.

The first letter, S, in SPLA does not stand for South Sudan, but for Sudan. The second letter, P, stands for the people of Sudan, not

peoples of Sudan. It is singular, not plural, as in many peoples inside one Sudan. The SPLA was founded as a nationalist project, an alternative to other kinds of nationalisms, to Arabism, to Islamism, but also to a separate South Sudan nationalism. The SPLA was a project to reform the state, not to create a new state.

Garang's speech at Koka Dam in 1986 was the most explicit statement of why the future of the South and the North lay together, why political salvation lay not in the formation of a new state but in the reform of the existing state.

Today, the line calling for independence has emerged triumphant. How did we get to this point?

Part of the answer lies in the nature of political leadership. Another part of the answer lies in ongoing political developments. The key development was the experience of power-sharing.

The first power-sharing agreement in Sudan was forged in 1972 as a result of the Addis Ababa Agreement. It lasted 10 years and broke down when it was no longer convenient for the regime in the North. It also collapsed because the agreement had little popular support in the North. Why? Because the 1972 agreement reformed the state in the South but not in the North.

The 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agree-

ment was built on lessons of the 1972 accord. The key lesson was that power-sharing had been too narrow. As a result, the CPA called for a broader sharing of powers ranging from political power to wealth to arms. Still, it remained a sharing of power between elites, between two ruling groups, the National Congress Party in the North and the SPLA. It left out the opposition in both the North and the South. It was power-sharing without democratization.

DEMOCRATIZATION AND VIOLENCE

What would democratization mean in the present context? Is there a link between democratization and violence? If so, what is that link?

I want to begin with two observations, one on political order, and the other on political violence. The first has to do with the link between organization of the state and maintenance of civil peace in a post-civil war situation.

Think of Uganda, 1986, which had just come out of a civil war. The terrain was marked by multiple armed militias, the best known being the Uganda Freedom Movement and the Federal Democratic Movement of Uganda. The Ugandan solution to this problem was known as the broad base. Rival militias were invited to join the new political order, but on two conditions: first

you could keep your political objectives, whether monarchist or militarist, provided you gave up your arms; second, you could have a share in political power — a governmental position — provided you gave up control over your militia.

South Sudan, too, is attempting to create a broad base. But in South Sudan, different members of the broad base have kept not only their arms but also command over their respective militias. Every important political leader in the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) has his own militia, so that one has to ask: What happens if a leader loses his position within the SPLM or loses an election? The obvious answer is that commander leaves with his militia.

Take the example of Gen. George Athor, who rebelled after losing the April 2010 election for governor of Jonglei state. He led his militia into rebellion — attacking Malakal in the oil-producing state of Upper Nile. Gen Athor had contested the election as an independent candidate. But what is to prevent a general who contests as an SPLM candidate and loses the election from withdrawing with his militia?

Most discussion on the question of violence in South Sudan today focuses on the specter of North-South violence. There is hardly any discussion on violence within the South. Even when internal violence in the South is discussed, it is seen as a consequence of North-South tensions.

We need to look at both internal and external violence, violence within state boundaries and violence between states. Political violence in African states is not between states, but within states. The exception is where one state was created from within the womb of another — like Eritrea out of Ethiopia — or where one political class was nurtured in the womb of another, like the relationship between the Eritrean People's Liberation Front and the Tigrayan People's Liberation Front, the Eritrean and Ethiopian armed movements, or the Rwandan Patriotic Army in Rwanda and the National Resistance Army in Uganda.

The first kind of violence abounds in post-colonial Africa, such as in the Rift Valley in Kenya, Darfur, the Ivory Coast and Eastern Congo. It is common to refer to all types of internal violence as "ethnic violence."

All these cases have one thing in common. All have reformed the central state by introducing elections and a multi-party system. But elections seem to lead to violence rather than stability. Why? One clue is another similarity between these cases of internal violence. None has managed to reform the local state — the local authority — the District Authority that the British used to call Native Authority.

As a form of power, the Native Authority is of colonial origin. Colonialism spread a fiction: that Africans have a herd mentality



H. MIKAEL TARKELA

and tend to stay in one place, so Africans have always lived in tribal homelands. This was the colonialists’ justification for administering every colony as a patchwork of tribal homelands

BLOOD IDENTITY

In actual fact, colonial administrations created homelands and Native Authorities. My research suggests that colonialism began with a program of ethnic cleansing. Take the case of Buganda, Uganda’s south-central region, where the national capital Kampala is located. All the Catholics were moved from Buganda to Masaka. Meanwhile, Mengo, located within Kampala, was considered a Protestant homeland. Administrative counties were designated as Protestant or Catholic or, in a few cases, Muslim. The tribe or region of the chief designated the nature of the homeland he administered. The ethnic cleansing in Buganda was religious, it was tribal elsewhere.

The Native Authority made an administrative distinction between those who were born or lived in the administrative area and those who were descended from its so-called original inhabitants. The distinction, in today’s political language, was between natives and *bafuruki* (immigrants). The system privileged natives over all others.

The colonial tribe was not the same as a pre-colonial ethnic group. The pre-colonial ethnic group was not an administrative but a cultural group. You could become a Muganda or a Munyankole or a Langi or a Dinka in the pre-colonial period. But you could not change your tribe officially in the colonial administration. Colonialism transformed tribe from a cultural identity to an administrative identity that claims to be based on descent, not just culture. It became a blood identity. Tribe became a sub-set of race.

Wherever the colonial notion of Native Authority has remained, authorities there define the population on the basis of descent, not residence.

RACE AND TRIBE

Colonialism was based on two sets of discriminations: one based on race, the other on tribe. Race divided natives from non-natives in urban areas. Tribe divided natives from *bafuruki* in the rural areas, inside each tribal homeland. The difference was that whereas natives in urban areas were discriminated against racially, natives in the tribal homelands were privileged.

This administrative structure inevitably generated inter-tribal conflicts. To begin with, every administrative area is multi-ethnic, yet, in every multi-ethnic area official administration discriminated against ethnic minorities, especially when it came to access to land and appointment of chiefs, that is, participation in local governance.

As the market system developed, more and more people migrated, either in search of jobs or land, and every administrative area became more and more multi-ethnic. In a situation where the population was multi-ethnic and power mono-ethnic, the result was that more and more people were disenfranchised as not being native to the area, even if they were born in the area. Ethnic conflict was the inevitable outcome.

Africa is littered with examples of this kind of conflict. It is the dynamic that drives ongoing civil wars around the continent such as in Darfur.

Will South Sudan be an exception? Will South Sudan create a new kind of state, or will it reproduce a reformed colonial state?

One indication can be found in the period before CPA was signed in 2005. Before the signing, there were liberated areas, while afterwards the whole of South Sudan became a liberated area. The fact is South Sudan became independent six years ago, in 2005.

Compare liberated SPLA-held areas in Sudan with Sudanese government-held areas, also in South Sudan before 2005. The initial trends are not encouraging. Structures of power in both areas are the same. Both areas are ruled by administrative chiefs who implement customary law as defined in the colonial period, which systematically privileges natives over *bafuruki*, men over women, and old over young. From this point of view, there is no difference between how local power is organized in the North and in the South. Because the local power discriminates actively and legally between different kinds of citizens of South Sudan, it is bound to generate tensions and conflict over time.

NORTH-SOUTH TENSIONS

The second type of violence, that between states, is specific to cases like Ethiopia and Eritrea, and Uganda and Rwanda. Will South and North Sudan be an exception?

This depends on the sources of North-South tensions. First, there are the border states that lie within the North or the South but which have populations that historically came from both. This is the case in Blue Nile, Nuba Mountains and Southern Kordofan. The border states were politically the most receptive to Garang’s call for a New Sudan. The border states also felt betrayed by the decision to create an independent South Sudan. At the same time, the political class in the border states is exposed to retaliation from the Northern political elite, one reason why it may turn to the SPLA for protection.

The second source of tension is the population of internally displaced persons (IDPs): the population of refugees from the southern war who lived in the North. How many still continue to live in the North? We do not know, but at the low end it is estimated at hundreds of thousands of people. Are they citizens of where they live, Sudan, or of the new state in which they historically resided, South Sudan? Like Eritreans in Ethiopia, they will most likely be the victims of a failure to think through the citizenship question.

The third source of tension is in the area of Abyei, along the North-South border, where the Misseriya of Darfur and the Ngok Dinka have shared livelihoods and political struggles for more than a thousand years. Historically, African societies had no fixed borders; the borders were porous, flexible and mobile. But the new borders are fixed and hard; you either belong or you do not. You cannot belong to both sides of the border. Will the new political arrangement with fixed borders pit the Misseriya and the Ngok Dinka against one another?

Should the populations of border regions, pastoralists who cross the North-South border annually in search of water in the dry season, the IDPs who have settled in their new homes — should they have dual citizenship?

In sum, then, there are two major sources of political violence after independence. First, there is possible violence between

North and South, which has three likely origins: populations with roots on both sides of the new border, IDPs, and peasants and pastoralists with shared livelihoods.

The second possible source of violence is within the South. It arises from the persistence of the Native Authority as the form of local power that turns cultural difference into a source of political and legal discrimination.

The solution for the first problem is dual nationality for border and migrant populations in the near future, which could possibly lead to a confederation in the distant future.

The solution for the second problem is to reform the Native Authority. If South Sudan is organized as a federation, how will citizenship be defined in each state in the federation: as ethnic or territorial? A territorial federation gives equal rights to all citizens

REFERENCE GUIDE

By Arun Gupta

Chris Hani – A charismatic leader of the African National Congress, Hani was also commander of its military wing and took over as head of the South African Communist Party in 1991 from Joe Slovo. He was popular among youth in the townships, building a large base for the SACP, and was considered the leading candidate to succeed a Nelson Mandela presidency, but was assassinated by an extremist close to the neo-Nazi Afrikaner Resistance Movement in April 1993.

Comprehensive Peace Agreement – A series of agreements reached from 2002 to 2005 between the government of Sudan and the SPLM/A, which established accords for a cease-fire, power- and wealth-sharing, resolutions of various conflicts and the right of the people of South Sudan for self-determination.

Derg – A committee of security services that was founded in 1974, deposing Emperor Haile Selassie the same year. It assumed control of Ethiopia by 1977 with Mengistu Haile Mariam as the undisputed leader.

Dinka and the Spirit of the Deng – The Dinka are a Nilotic people who traverse the North-South divide. Their traditional economy is based on cattle herding and millet farming. The Deng is an important entity in the Dinka religion, responsible for rain and fertility.

Ethiopian People’s Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) – Founded in 1989 as an umbrella group for various national fronts, it is currently the ruling coalition in Ethiopia.

Eritrean People’s Liberation Front (EPLF) – Founded in the early 1970s, the EPLF was by the 1980s the main guerrilla organization fighting the Soviet-backed Ethiopian state. It was allied with similar movements such as the Tigrayan People’s Liberation Front (TPLF), formed in 1975, which overthrew the Ethiopian state in May 1991. Under U.N. supervision, a referendum was held in 1993, creating the state of Eritrea. The next year the EPLF became a political party, the People’s Front for Democracy and Justice, which has been Eritrea’s sole party since then.

John Garang – As a Sudanese military officer, Garang was sent to quell a mutiny by

who live within a state, whereas an ethnic federation distinguishes legally and politically between different kinds of residents, depending on their ethnic origin.

The basic question that faces South Sudan is not very different from the one that faces most African countries. Will South Sudan learn from the African experience — of ongoing civil war and ethnic conflict — and rethink political citizenship and the political state in order to create a new political order?

The future of South Sudan and its people rides on the answer to this question.

Mahmood Mamdani is the director of the Makerere Institute of Social Research in Kampala, Uganda, and Herbert Lehman Professor of Government at Columbia University. He is the author of Saviors and Survivors: Darfur, Politics and the War on Terror.

hundreds of soldiers in Southern Sudan and instead encouraged the uprising, founding in the process the Sudan People’s Liberation Army in 1983. In the 1960s Garang had been involved in the Southern Anya Nya insurgency. He earned a Ph.D. in agricultural economics at Iowa State University and received officer’s training at Fort Benning, Georgia. He signed the Comprehensive Peace Agreement with the Sudanese government in January 2005. Garang returned to Khartoum in July as a vice president, and died three weeks later in a helicopter crash.

Josiah Tongogara – Known as Zimbabwe’s Che Guevara for his magnetic presence, Tongogara led the main guerilla army in the liberation struggle. He was also a central figure at the Lancaster House Conference that led to Zimbabwean independence. He died in a car accident in Mozambique days after the peace deal was signed in December 1979.

Koka Dam Speech – John Garang delivered a speech at the Koka Dam peace talks in Ethiopia in 1986, saying the SPLM/A view is that “both Arabism and Islam, among others, are components inextricably woven into the fabric of Sudan’s unique and singular identity.” He offers a broad definition of African as a non-racial political identity and that Arab is a cultural assertion and is present all over Sudan.

Mahdiyya/Mohamed Abdulla – In Shi’ism the Mahdi is an important figure, akin to the Christian Messiah. In 1881, Mohammed Ahmed-Ibn-Seyyid-Abdulla declared himself the Mahdi and led a successful uprising against the British-Ottoman rule over Sudan, briefly establishing the first modern African state.

Robert Mugabe – Secretary general of the Zimbabwe African National Union since the 1960s, Mugabe has headed the government in one position or another since being elected Prime Minister in 1980. He returned to the capital of Harare in December 1979 to huge, supportive crowds following the Lancaster House Agreement.

SPLM/A – The Sudan People’s Liberation Army was founded in 1983 and quickly established the Sudan People’s Liberation Movement, the political wing. John Garang was elected to head both in 1983.

In Canada the Center No Longer Holds

By JUDY REBICK

TORONTO, Canada—By winning a majority in the 308-seat House of Commons in Canada's May 2 election, Prime Minister Stephen Harper and his Conservative Party seem to be consolidating a political shift to the right, but appearances can be deceiving. Harper now has 167 members of parliament to push the right's agenda of militarization, attacks on public-sector unions, criminalization of poverty and dissent, ecologically devastating energy policy and the smothering of democratic space.

But the same election propelled the left-leaning New Democratic Party (NDP) into the position of Official Opposition for the first time ever. The NDP increased its parliamentary bloc from 37 to 102 seats, coming at the expense of the once-mighty Liberal Party (Canada's equivalent of the Democratic Party), which dropped to 34 seats, and the sovereigntist Bloc Québécois, which shriveled from 49 seats to four.

Both Harper and Jack Layton, leader of the social-democratic NDP, got the results they were aiming for. Harper got his majority and Layton replaced the Liberal Party as not just the opposition but possibly as the only federal alternative to the Harperites.

Because of Canada's first-past-the-post system, a candidate can win with well under 50 percent if the vote is split multiple ways, Harper's party won only 39.6 percent of the national vote. This

means more than 60 percent of the electorate rejected the Conservatives, so there has not really been a shift to the right. The political and economic elite have veered right since the late 1980s, when Conservative Prime Minister Brian Mulroney — also opposed by some 60 percent of voters — pushed through free-trade pacts with the United States, culminating in the North American Free Trade Agreement that went into effect in 1994; public opinion on most critical issues, meanwhile, has remained progressive.

POLARIZED ELECTORATE

This election signified foremost a polarization: for and against Stephen Harper, whose vote increased by only 2 percent over the 2008 election. He went from a minority to the first majority Conservative government since 1988 by focusing on key ridings (as electoral districts are known) in Ontario province where he could beat the Liberals. What no one expected was for Jack Layton to become the alternative to Harper.

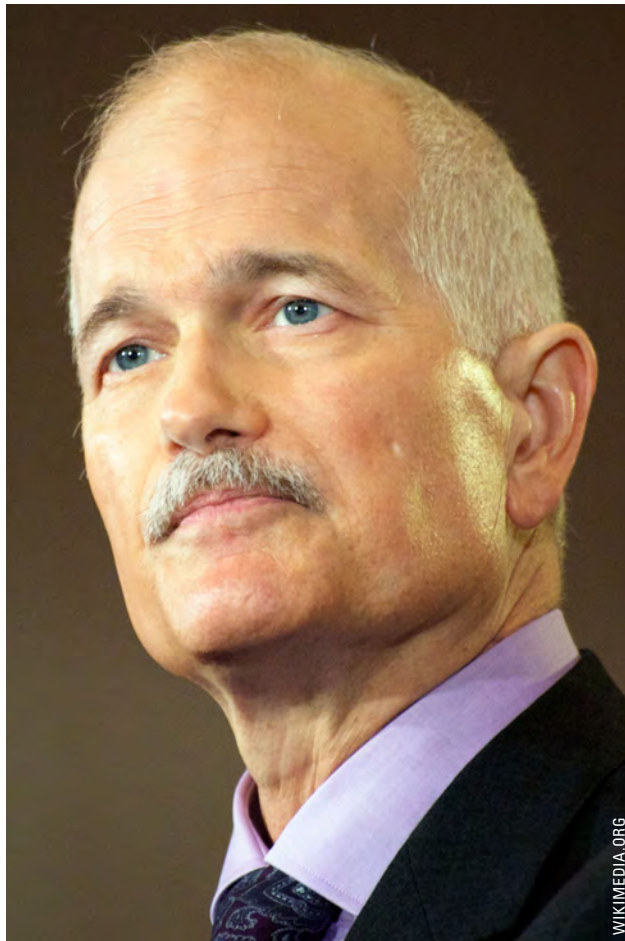
Harper is an Evangelical Christian but social conservatism has never been his priority. Since he came to power in 2003 as head of the Conservatives, which unified the populist, socially conservative Reform Party with the fiscally conservative Progressive Conservative Party, Harper's goal has been to fashion a new middle in Canadian politics further to the right.

To keep this alliance intact and maintain the support of the corporate media, Harper

will be limited in his ability to restrict reproductive rights and LGBT rights. The Religious Right here is losing steam. A recent study by Environics, a top polling firm, found that 75 percent of Canadians support a woman's right to abortion and 70 percent support gay marriage, both increases over the last 10 years. The vast majority support single-payer public healthcare and think

between "good" and "bad" immigrants by criminalizing refugees and other marginal immigrants.

In the battle against Harper, many progressives called for "uniting the left" either by creating a Liberal-NDP coalition or by voting for whichever candidate could defeat the Conservative in a specific race. As Canada is a parliamentary democracy, indi-



NEW DEMOCRATIC PARTY LEADER JACK LAYTON: The NDP is now the Official Opposition party, but will it stay true to its progressive roots?

taxes are generally beneficial, even if they are unsure if the tax system is fair.

The real dangers of a no-holds-barred Conservative government include suffocating democracy and civic engagement, as witnessed by the systematic police brutality in Toronto during the June 2010 G20 summit; high levels of militarization, with military spending having jumped more than 40 percent under Harper; increasing criminalization of poverty; attacks on public sector unions; and more support for Alberta tar sands oil production, one of the most carbon-intensive projects on the planet. Harper has already altered the tax system in favor of corporations and the rich, so the gap between rich and poor, which increased under both Conservative and Liberal governments, will continue to grow.

WHY HARPER WON

Harper won a majority for a number of reasons. Right-wing Liberal voters moved to the Conservatives to stop the NDP from winning more seats, Canada has weathered the global economic crisis significantly better than its neighbor to the south, business interests and the corporate media enthusiastically backed Harper, and the Conservatives targeted and won more support from Asian communities in Toronto, which have been until now a Liberal stronghold. Unlike the Tea Party or Canada's Reform Party, Harper's party is not overtly anti-immigration. Its tactic is to create divisions



PRIME MINISTER STEPHEN HARPER: The real danger from a majority Conservative government, led by Harper, is to democracy and civil society.

vidual parties choose their slate, including the prime minister, prior to the election and whichever party wins the most seats gets to form the government.

THE QUEBEC FACTOR

In Quebec, always more progressive than the rest of the country, voters swung behind the NDP as a way to defeat Harper. Voters were also fatigued with the sovereigntist Bloc Québécois, which has had a majority in Quebec since 1993, and increased the NDP caucus from one to 58 seats in the French-speaking province. With polls showing broad Québécois support for Layton, the NDP vote in English Canada also increased, garnering them five more seats. But this allowed the Conservatives to win in more ridings because the opposition vote was then split between the Liberals and the NDP. Having an NDP caucus that is half Québécois can bring together the concerns of progressives in Quebec and English Canada, which is a positive sign, as they often have little to do with each other.

An NDP opposition also means a greater voice for social movements in Parliament. Layton and much of his caucus are strong feminists and supporters of LGBT rights, and he has already called for a federal inquiry into the G20 repression. Layton has opposed the continued military intervention in Afghanistan but pledged during the election to maintain military spending, returning Canadian troops to more of a peacekeeping role.

NDP AS ALTERNATIVE

It remains to be seen whether the Liberal Party will rebuild itself or if Layton will succeed in positioning the NDP as the alternative to the Conservatives. For progressives, what is most important is to ensure that the NDP, which has accepted neoliberal economic policies, is pushed to stand up for progressive issues. In power, the NDP has always moved to the right under the pressure of governing a capitalist state, but Jack Layton has moved in this direction to get into a position to take over the Liberals. However, what really changed was that while the NDP remains federalist, Jack Layton has clearly stated that he supports the aspirations of the people of Quebec to protect their language, culture and autonomy.

What the NDP does in parliament hinges on whether grassroots movements can pressure the party through a broad mobilization, which they did during the election. State funding is no longer available for movements that directly challenge the government. For too long, progressive social groups and unions have relied on old tactics and old methods, and mainly talked to each other. They need to link up with vulnerable sectors, especially communities of color in and around big cities like Toronto.

How trade unions will react to the Harper majority is an open question. Despite political attacks against public-sector unions, as well as deindustrialization, which has weakened private-sector unions and driven wages and benefits down, union militancy has not increased. Unionization in Canada has declined in recent years, but it remains at 31.4 percent of the workforce, and even higher among public workers. Harper is likely to attack public-sector unions through privatization, perhaps beginning with the postal workers, one of the most militant unions in the country.

Building broader support for an environmental justice movement against the tar sands, mining and clear cutting is another component of the resistance to Harper's government, which is trying to undermine national and international agreements to address global warming.

Finally, many of the youth who mobilized during the election organized a National Day of Action for Electoral Reform. They say the majority voted against Harper and now they are going to hold him accountable. While there has been organizing for electoral reform in Canada since the early 1990s, including two unsuccessful provincial referenda, there has never been street action, so it is a promising start. Their aim is to build a movement for electoral reform to prevent this type of election result from happening again.

Judy Rebick is a long-time feminist activist, journalist and writer living in Toronto.

Zapatistas

Continued from page 7

The 30 *comandantes* of the Clandestine Indigenous Revolutionary Committee who formed a guard of honor on the stage melted into the crowd after the event, their faces unknown, their words attributable to no one.

Nonetheless, the situation is fragile as the Zapatista communities struggle to survive

of which is determined by politicians “in up-scale restaurants and offices paid for by us.” By the end of the three-day march Sicilia’s tone had hardened, recognizing perhaps that Calderon had no intention of paying him any heed. Sicilia called for civil disobedience should the government ignore their demands. “It takes balls to strike back, to refuse to pay taxes, and it will take all of us



KARA NEWHOUSE

MOUNTING TOLL: At the national “March for Peace” that culminated in a rally of over 100,000 people in Mexico City on May 8, a mock cemetery is erected representing the victims of the government’s failed drug war.

and withstand the twin pressures of army and paramilitary aggression and state funds used to tempt rebels away from the Zapatista ranks.

Meanwhile, the next day in Mexico City, at least 70 victims of violence took turns to speak out, including Patricia Duarte, whose infant son was burned to death in a crèche in Sonora along with 47 other children. In Mexico today, the state of insecurity covers everything from the village of San Juan Copala, Oaxaca, whose inhabitants were forced to flee en masse last year due to state-sponsored violence and the parents of those children who died in the nursery. San Juan Copala declared an autonomous zone, Zapatista-style, on Jan. 1, 2007 and was immediately besieged by paramilitaries with close links to the state governor. Unlike the Chiapan rebels they had no weapons to back up their claims.

Mexican President Felipe Calderon responded to the march with a televised address in which he equated the call for an end to state violence with surrender to the drug cartels. “We have might, right and the law on our side,” said a belligerent Calderon, insisting that the army would remain on the streets and at the center of his national security strategy.

Mere days after the march, Amnesty International released a report accusing Mexican security forces of torture, disappearances and murder, including charges of disguising innocent victims of army violence as members of drug gangs. Amnesty also criticized Mexico’s justice system for failing to charge a single member of the armed forces with criminal activity despite dozens of well-documented cases.

Juan Sicilia countered, “We are not trying to overthrow the government. We want to rebuild the social fabric of this nation.” Sicilia said that the Mexican people were paying an intolerable price for an unwinnable war that no one asked for, the course

to surround parliament until our demands are heard.”

Sicilia has launched a citizen initiative that is gathering momentum and which has no affiliation with Mexico’s discredited political parties. In 2006 the EZLN launched “la otra campana,” the other campaign – an attempt to build a popular movement that would eschew elections and challenge the state from below. If there is one lesson learned since 1994, it is that the Zapatistas cannot carry the burden of hope alone and that the rest of Mexico must do its own share of the heavy lifting.

“We know you didn’t understand anything,” joked one Zapatista delegate in San Cristobal, referring to the translation of each speech into several indigenous languages. “But that’s the way it goes, you just had to put up with us. Thank you for your patience.”

The Zapatistas remain the ever-patient outsiders in a country rent by violence and corruption, quietly building an autonomous alternative, a living example of what a disciplined, long-term struggle can achieve. “You are not alone,” said *Comandante David* during the rally, addressing victims of violence throughout Mexico. The Zapatistas have been alone for too long, and derided for lacking “common sense” and refusing to throw their weight behind the lesser of three evils at election time.

With just a moment in the limelight Javier Sicilia has already concluded that if Mexico’s political system fails to respond to the current crisis of representation, and if a sweeping new security law is approved, the 2012 presidential elections shall be a pointless exercise: A candidate bound and gagged by institutional corruption will be elected to lead a nation edging dangerously close to a politico-military dictatorship.

Michael McCaughan is a writer and researcher based in the Burren, Ireland. He is working on a biography of Mumia Abu-Jamal.

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The Last of the Bohemians

In April, a Lower East Side salon hosted a multimedia art opening titled “I feel so sorry for myself.” I wondered if the salon’s proprietor, Steve Cannon, wasn’t feeling that way himself right about now. Cannon, 76, has lived in the townhouse at 285 East 3rd Street for the past forty years, for half of which time he’s been running A Gathering of the Tribes, a salon and art gallery. Cannon, who is blind, found out in March that the building was for sale when a visiting friend asked him about the realtor’s sign out front.

At the opening, which featured the paintings and drawings of eight artists from the Netherlands, a hundred visitors wandered the apartment’s three main rooms while a band played in the garden. A silent gramophone sat prominently in one corner; a piano was on the opposite side of the room. Occasionally someone tapped out a tune on the piano while watching a video installation on the adjacent wall.

Officially, A Gathering of the Tribes is a nonprofit arts organization that hosts poetry readings and musical performances,

with the option to renew for an additional five years at \$2,200 a month (which he has been paying since 2009).

It seems Zhang, too, has been plagued with financial trouble ever since she took over. She told me she spent about \$500,000 to renovate the building and bring it up to code. Despite installing higher-rent tenants in the

other three apartments, she still spends about \$2,000 a month on the building. Cannon’s is the only apartment that’s been continuously occupied since he sold the building; other units were vacant for several months to over two years.

“I have two kids to raise — am I supposed to be a charity?” Zhang asked when I called her. She says that she’s selling the building because she’s losing money. She claims Cannon is only staying in his apartment through her good graces: “he never extended the agreement, but I still let him stay here,” she says.

Cannon is looking for allies “with some deep pockets” to buy back the building and maintain Tribes in its current state, only charging artists an amount that would cover the maintenance costs, which he estimates at \$3,000 a month. The building is listed for \$2.9 million; Tribes’ annual budget is approximately \$150,000. He’s had some interest, he says, but no solid offers.

“If he wants to get someone to buy the house, go ahead. I’m not stopping him,” says Zhang. She wouldn’t comment on Cannon’s tenancy, saying it will be up to the next owner to negotiate with the tenants, and that the building is being sold “as is.”

Cannon counts such art world luminaries as the Jay Tilton gallery, Salon 94 and the artist Steve Hammons among his supporters, and it seems like every other day a visitor spontaneously donates

\$200 to \$1,000. While Cannon would like to regain ownership of the building, if he can’t his main concern is staying in his home and being able to continue Tribes’ work.

A COUNTER-CULTURAL TRADITION

The story of how Cannon came to buy the townhouse may explain why he’s been so generous with other young artists with uncertain prospects. In 1970, he was homeless, and at a friend’s suggestion called up West Village realtor Arnold Warwick to ask if he could stay a month in his building. Warwick offered to sell him the building instead, and gave him ten years to pay off the mortgage.

Deanna Choice, a self-taught painter, met Cannon when she was living in a shelter on East 4th Street years ago. In 2004, Choice’s paintings were shown in “Art Around the Park” an annual show Tribes organizes in Tompkins Square Park, which led to a scholarship at the New York Studio School. She drops in on Steve now to see how he’s doing.

Phil Hartman, the owner of Two Boots Pizzeria, who has collaborated with Cannon on the Howl! Festival, recently hosted a “Save The Tribes” day, donating the entire day’s proceeds at Two Boots’ seven Manhattan locations — over \$7,000 — to Tribes. “Tribes is one of the last places left that carries on the great counter-cultural tradition of the East Village/Lower East Side,” he says. There will be another fundraiser May 29 hosted by the jazz pianist Jason Moran.

Even if Zhang or the future owner honors Cannon’s agreement, it only covers his tenancy through 2014. But supporters, though low on funds, are optimistic. Grunthauer says, “I’m confident Tribes will survive” regardless of the building’s fate. Choice echoes: “This kind of place doesn’t exist in the United States for emerging artist. It’s needed.”

—IRINA IVANOVA



Steve Cannon



Visitors gather in the backyard of 285 E 3rd St at the opening of “I feel so sorry for myself.”

exhibits visual art and publishes a semiannual magazine. Unofficially, it’s an incubator for emerging artists of all types.

Exavier Wardlaw, 63, a playwright and long-time friend of Cannon, describes it as the last of the Harlem Renaissance. Tribes’ goal is to be a space for young artists to gather and express themselves, and especially to promote cross-pollination between writers, visual, and performance artists. As a multi-cultural and multi-generational art space, “there’s no similar place in New York,” says Jeff Grunthauer, 29, who is a grantwriter for Tribes.

MOUNTING DEBTS

“My problem is, I can’t say no,” Cannon explains. We’re sitting in his living room with Grunthauer and Wardlaw, who’s here today to audition actors for his new play, *Angels, Giants, and Monsters*. During our conversation, actors filed in and out of the room behind us. Friends and well-wishers dropping by to see Steve went directly to the living room couch, which was conveniently placed across from the front door.

“If someone comes in and says Steve, can I have an art show, can I read some poetry here — in spite of what it’s gonna cost, I always say yes.” Cannon, who was a humanities professor at Medgar Evers College and Hunter College as well as a poet and novelist, retired from CUNY in 1989, around the same time he began losing his eyesight. Tribes was incorporated as a nonprofit in 1990.

Financing Tribes got Cannon into significant debt, and he sold the building in 2004 for \$950,000. His goal was to carry on the organization’s work without the stress of managing the building. Out of more than 20 potential buyers, Cannon says Zhang “was the only one who seemed like she was going to be square with me.” According to the agreement they signed at closing, Cannon would be able to live in his current second-floor apartment for five years, paying \$1,000 a month,

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City of Life and Death

City of Life and Death (2009)

DIRECTED BY LU CHUAN

RELEASED BY KINO INTERNATIONAL

PLAYING AT FILM FORUM THROUGH MAY 24

City of Life and Death, Lu Chuan's third feature film, details the unspeakable atrocities that occurred during the 1937 Nanjing Massacre, when Japanese forces captured the former capital of the Republic of China, killing an estimated 300,000 civilians and raping 80,000 women over a six-week period.

The film opens with recollections of the massacre's onset from first-hand accounts written on postcards and a powerful evocation of the otherworldly setting through the eyes of Japanese officer Kadokawa (Hideo Nakaizumi). Once the narrative unfolds, however, it abandons historical consciousness and devolves into an obvious morality play.

After reading Japanese soldiers' accounts of events, Chuan decided to attempt to humanize their brutality. As a numbing sequence of rape, murder and violence crushes the survivors' spirits, the film fails to convincingly integrate the struggles of individual characters with the overall banality of evil.

Instead of challenging Japan's stubborn reluctance to officially acknowledge the specifics of the Nanjing tragedy, *City of Life and Death* channels the national, political and ethnic dimensions of this shameful episode into a universal parable of abuse of power.

The "good" characters stand out because they are qualified as Western — by association if not pedigree — and their charitable gestures are framed within a sphere of Chris-

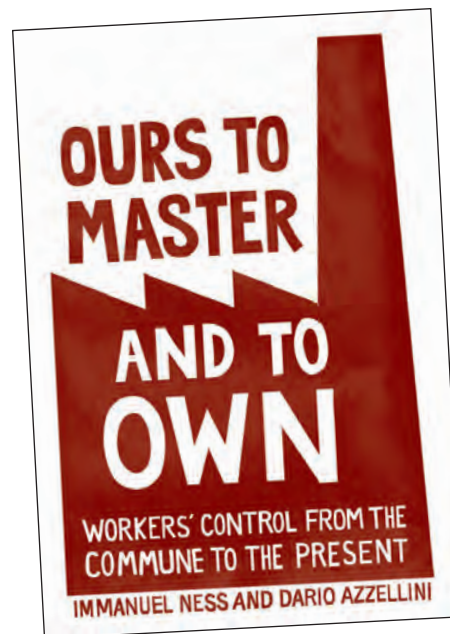
tianity and personal redemption rather than popular resistance. In a church, German businessman and obvious Schindler equivalent John Rabe (John Paisley) breaks into guilty tears when announcing that a hundred Chinese women must sacrifice themselves to the pleasure of the Japanese to ensure the safety of other Nanjing residents. With similar pathos, right before his forced departure from the city, Rabe falls to his knees as he watches the Chinese clamor for help behind a fence. Mr. Tang (Fan Wei), Rabe's assistant, atones for his selfishly opportunistic behavior by staying in Nanjing to face certain death, but he is motivated by gratitude for his pregnant wife's escape, not support for his countrymen.

City of Life and Death carries a decidedly misogynist undertone in its treatment of women as enablers of male compassion, hope, mourning and resilience. Kadokawa's affections are reflected through his romance with a Japanese prostitute and his spiritual bond with Tang's sister-in-law, Miss Jiang (Gao Yanyuan), who gives him her rosary, when he reveals he attended a Christian school.

Geared to express airy religiosity over wartime madness, Chuan's direction, though undeniably accomplished, misfires because of its tightness. Visual motifs like the recurring focus on hands prove as transparent as the portentous musical score. Carefully wrought compositions appear as clean and detached as the black-and-white cinematography that gives them shape.

"Life is more difficult than death," Kadokawa ruminates in conclusion, after freeing two Chinese prisoners of war. If the filmmaker's exercise in Hollywood grandiloquence was closer to the contemplative nuance of Malick's *The Thin Red Line*, or even the unadorned humanity of Eastwood's *Letters from Iwo Jima*, this final note would have sounded less complacent.

—KENNETH CRAB



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SANDRA STEINGRABER | Biologist and
acclaimed author of the new book, *Raising
Elijah*, on the health impacts of fracking

ROBERT HOWARTH | Cornell University
biologist and co-author of the new study on
the true climate footprint of shale gas

WENONAH HAUTER | Executive Director,
Food and Water Watch

moderated by CRAIG UNGER | Bestselling
author and *Vanity Fair* contributing editor

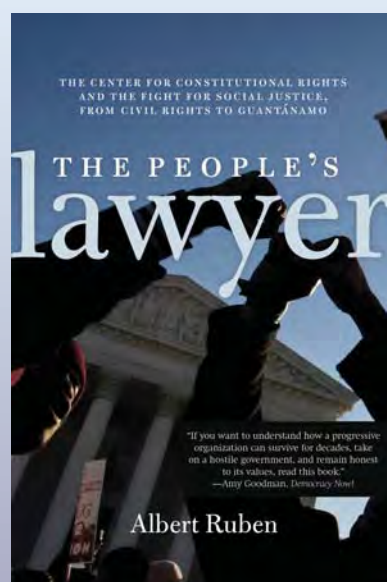
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